

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today, April 21, 1999, I was unavoidably detained during roll-call No. 95, and thus my vote on the passage of H.R. 1184 was not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" in support of the legislation.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1184, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 850

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 850, the Security and Freedom Through Encryption Act.

My name was erroneously added as a cosponsor to this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

#### VIOLENCE AMONG OUR YOUTH, AND THE INCIDENT IN LITTLE- TON, COLORADO

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard my colleagues rising to the Floor of the House, I, too, stand with a heavy heart to offer my sympathy and concern to the families of the deceased, to the children, to the students, to all who have been impacted by yesterday's tragic incident in Littleton, Colorado. We are shocked by the sheer randomness of it.

We realize that our schools in America should be safe places for our children to learn, and we are disturbed that these shootings were out of revenge, and because someone made fun of these young people.

Let us now not point the finger of blame, but let the people of America like and organizations like the National Rifle Association, children's advocacy groups, churches, synagogues, and parishes, let us look to solutions such as more health services for juveniles. Two-thirds of our children in America are denied real mental health counseling services when they need it. Let us, on Friday, April 23, 1999, Children's Memorial Day, commemorate the thousands of children and youth who are killed by violence.

As one who works with the Congressional Children's Caucus and chairs it, I ask that all of the caucuses in this House that are concerned about children gather for one meeting to begin a real agenda that deals with safety in schools, getting mental health services to our children, counseling to the families, and stop the blame game.

This is an American crisis. We must heal our Nation. To the people of Littleton, Colorado, my prayers are with you.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today with a heavy heart to talk about the tragic incidents of yesterday in Littleton, Colorado. First of all, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of yesterday's horrific shootings.

Along with being shocked by the sheer randomness and senselessness of the violence yesterday, I am dismayed by the string of violent incidents that have occurred in our schools within the past 18 months.

The statistics on adolescent death trends are startling: homicide deaths for teenagers between 15–19 accounted for 85 percent or 2,457 deaths by firearms and suicide rates have increased by more than 300 percent in the last three decades. In yesterday's shootings, more than 20 people were killed including the two suspects who killed themselves.

Schools should be safe and secure places for all students, teachers and staff members. All children should be able to go to and from school without fear for their safety.

According to news reports, these young suspects were outcasts in the school community. During the shooting, the suspects reportedly said that they were "out for revenge" for having been made fun of last year. This is truly a cry for help that was not heard in time.

This incident underscores the urgent need for mental health services to address the needs of young people like the suspects from yesterday. Without concerted efforts to address the mental health disorders that affect our children, we may witness more terrifying violence in our schools.

Friday, April 23, 1999 is Children's Memorial Day to commemorate the thousands of children and youth who are killed by violence each year. On that day, the governors of every state have been asked to fly the Children's Memorial Flag.

As chair of the Children's Caucus, I would like to urge my Colleagues to remember Friday as a national day to honor children whose lives have been cut short by violence. I also ask that we pray for the families who have been devastated by the violence of Monday.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### MEDICARE TRUTH IN BILLING ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of hospitals and Medicare beneficiaries across this country who have a vested interest in changing the way the Health Care Finance Administration, HCFA, and its financial intermediaries itemize the explanation of Medicare benefits and Medicare summary notices, both of which are statements each Medicare beneficiary receives from HCFA for services rendered them that they are reimbursed by Medicare.

Unfortunately for hospitals and Medicare beneficiaries, these statements all too often contain inaccurate and misleading information; specifically, information that overstates the amount that Medicare reimburses hospitals for inpatient services, and understates a hospital's contribution to financing any shortfall in Medicare reimbursements for such services; information that clouds the truth for Medicare beneficiaries instead of clarifying the truth.

At a time when hospitals' margins are shrinking due to changes in Medicare reimbursement rates, at a time when hospitals have been plagued by the inappropriate use of the False Claims Act and at a time when the President in his fiscal year 2000 budget has proposed further cuts in Medicare, it is about time that hospitals be given the credit they deserve for financing part of the inpatient expenses as a result of Medicare's underpayment.

Moreover, at a time when seniors are barraged by vague billing information, it is about time that they be given the full truth regarding the amount Medicare reimburses hospitals for services provided them.

I am happy to announce that I have introduced the Truth in Medicare Billing Act, a measure that will ensure that HCFA reports the correct amount Medicare reimburses hospitals for inpatient services. The Medicare Truth in Billing Act, in addition to requiring HCFA to report the actual amount it reimburses hospitals for inpatient services, will require that HCFA add a line to all Medicare summary statements disclosing the amount equal to the difference between the amount of total inpatient charges incurred and the amount Medicare reimbursed the hospital for those charges.

It is a simple fix to a problem that I believe should be resolved in the very near future.

The initial level of support that the Medicare Truth in Billing Act has received has been tremendous. The measure has been endorsed by the American Hospital Association. In addition, numerous State hospital associations, staff and hospital administrators in my district and throughout the country have contacted my office to express their overwhelming support for the